

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 3 and 5-18 were pending in the present application. Claims 9 and 10 were withdrawn from consideration and have been cancelled. By virtue of this response, claim 16 has been cancelled, and claims 17 and 18 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 5-15 and 17-18 are currently under consideration. Amendment and cancellation of certain claims is not to be construed as a dedication to the public of any of the subject matter of the claims as previously presented. No new matter has been added.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(a)

The Office has rejected claim 16 as allegedly being anticipated by Orita et al. (6,117,700). This claim has been cancelled, thereby rendering the rejection moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 17 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. These claims have been rewritten in independent form to include all the elements of now-cancelled claim 16.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. 299002052000. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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